

than \$9 billion, and the administration wants to cut it almost \$2 billion more.

Mr. AKIN. So we're talking about less than 1 percent, a minuscule part of our defense, to protect our cities from being turned into dust. I don't understand the logic of that.

Also, this is a North Korean ballistic missile threat. So it's not just Iran, and Iran threatening Europe. We're also talking about North Korea developing longer and longer-range missiles, and as they stack more—as you have said before, you take these solid rocket motors and you stack them up into multiple stages. You get the velocity to get the distance to start threatening the continental United States from North Korea. And he hasn't shown any signs of backing off. He's still busy making nuclear weapons and still busy working on his warheads. And even if he doesn't use them, he wants to sell them to other people. So why would we want to be cutting our missile defense at this time? It just seems like about insanity.

I yield to the gentleman.

Mr. FRANKS of Arizona. The thing that's important to remember is that Iran gained most of its missile technology from North Korea, and Iran has actually outpaced North Korea now in their missile capability, but North Korea has nuclear warheads now, and if North Korea sold Iran missile technology, is it unthinkable to think they might sell them nuclear warheads at some point? It may not be even necessary for Iran to build their own warheads.

And here's the really astonishing tragedy about this. Rhetorically, some of the liberals say that the reason that we should cut our GMD system is because we need more testing. Well, under this system, where they're cutting down on the number of interceptors we have, we won't be able to test this system again until after 2014.

Mr. AKIN. So we're talking out of both sides of our mouth here again. What you are saying is, on the one hand, they're saying we need more testing, and second of all, they're cutting the budget so we can't test.

Mr. FRANKS of Arizona. That's exactly right.

Mr. AKIN. It just comes back out to the same thing. There's this hostility to developing the defense that we need to protect our homeland, and the excuses that it won't work have been proven—test after test, these things are working extremely well, and the fact is that if there's any function of this Congress that we should be paying attention to, it's protecting our own citizens. And so I just find it impossible to understand the decisions that are being made in cutting the missile defense.

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I don't think that's the right thing to do. I can certainly say that on the Armed Services Committee, I will not vote to cut missile defense.

And I would yield back to my friend from Utah, Congressman BISHOP.

Mr. BISHOP of Utah. I appreciate that commitment, and you have my commitment at the same time. This is a work that needs to go forward. We have money to do this.

One of the things we also—when Secretary Gates talked to us, he talked about a zero sum game, meaning that if we wanted to improve this missile defense budget we would have to take money from some other part of our military needs to put over here. And I'm sorry, I reject that.

One of the things we need to do is make sure that the military is properly funded. It's really the only constitutional role we really have to do, and make sure that it's not coming from some other—we're not going to cannibalize another area of the military just to make sure that this done. That is simply flat out wrong, and I'm not going to do it.

I'd like to add one other negative since I'm on the role of whining here about things going on. This administration did something that was totally unique in its budget process called a "gag order" which simply meant that when the Kinetic Energy Interceptor Program was canceled, it was canceled during the time of the gag order. There is not a single person on Capitol Hill, in any branch of Congress, that knew what was taking place because no one in the Pentagon was allowed to talk about what the decision was. A stop work order had been administered by this administration before anyone knew what was taking place.

And, in fact, when the Secretary of Defense announced his overall view, not one word on this missile program was mentioned in that, even though, 2 days earlier, the decision had been made to cut it.

Mr. AKIN. Reclaiming my time, wait a minute now. I recall that the President stood on this floor, and one of the things that he made a big point about was transparency. I have a hard time understanding the transparency of the administration cutting a major part of missile defense that's very important, and we're on the Armed Services Committee and we didn't even have a clue that that was going on. Is that transparency?

I yield to my friend from Utah.

Mr. BISHOP of Utah. No, in my definition it's not transparency. Now, I know that some people have said the Pentagon leaks like a sieve. To be honest, that's what President Nixon said about the White House when he came in there, and I hope there's no plumbbers left around to try and fix the Pentagon situation.

But it's one of those things that, in a republic, in a republic, we are not devoted by those types of secrets that should take place there. And the representatives of people who make these decisions should be made aware, you can do it in some kind of a system or order in which sensitive information is let out.

But this is not sensitive information. This is what the future direction of this country should be. And I'm sorry, before you put the stop work order, you at least should be able to tell Congress what you're about to do.

I hope we never, never engage in this kind of gag order in any branch of this administration again because, as the gentleman from Missouri accurately said, it is not transparency. It was not what was promised. And it is simply a wrong problem which allows a whole lot of issues to be pushed to the side, which could have been easily fixed, adjudicated, simplified had we simply had some kind of communication as the process was being developed.

Congress is now behind the 8 ball on this. If we want to fix this problem, and I desperately think we should, our options are severely limited because of the way the administration handled this year's budget preparation.

I yield back.

Mr. AKIN. Well, that's quite an indictment. And you sure had a snoutful of bad news for us. I didn't even know about that last one. And it's enough to really make you irritated, isn't it?

You know, we hear about transparency, and yet there isn't transparency, and this isn't the way we should be running a country. It seems to me that somebody's trying to hide something. That's what it seems like, somebody is trying to cover something up.

Now we're about done with our first half hour so we're going to be finishing up on ballistic missile and strategic missile defense. I am going to let the last word go to my good friend from Arizona, Congressman FRANKS.

Mr. FRANKS of Arizona. Ostensibly, the whole purpose of cutting missile defense is so that we can use the money somewhere else. But sometimes we forget that when we suffer some type of weakness in our military system it invites or it provokes some type of attack from an enemy which nearly always costs us much more than any savings that we had. When airplanes hit our buildings and our Pentagon, they cost us in our total economy, around \$2 trillion. And so this is not only bad defense. It's bad economics.

And if some day, if we build a system and we don't need it, I will stand before the American public and say, you know, we used this system every day because it deterred an attack. But I'll still apologize to you for spending all the money.

But God save us all from the day when we have to stand before the American people and apologize to them because some type of an attack left hundreds of thousands of our people dead in a city or worse and we had the ability to defend them and we didn't out of political correctness.

And with that I yield back to the gentleman and thank him very much.

Mr. AKIN. I appreciate your passion on that subject. Gentlemen, there's one point that I always like to make on